



Skagit River System Cooperative

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January 29, 2015

Lisa Wood
SEPA Official
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Electronic Correspondence

Reference: DNS 15-004 Barn Pipe Tidegate Replacement

Dear Ms. Wood:

Skagit River System Cooperative (SRSC) makes the following comments on behalf of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe. The Swinomish Tribe and the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe are federally recognized Tribes and signatories to the Treaty of Point Elliott of 1855. The Barn Pipe Tidegate replacement may affect environmental resources vital to the Tribes.

SRSC disagrees with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Determination of Non-significance (DNS) for the Barn Pipe Tidegate replacement project. The new tidegate, pipe, and cross dike will block anadromous fish passage to historic tidal waters and isolate historic tidal waters from inundation of the tidal prism. These are significant impacts. The new tidegate and pipe should pass all life stages of anadromous salmonids across as much of the tidal prism as is practical for the site and as much of the tidal prism as is practical should be restored to the channels behind the dike.

SRSC requests WDFW delay its SEPA determination until a design is in place that avoids the significant impacts of the current design. SRSC has a long history of working with WDFW in this area on estuary restoration projects and tidegate issues. We stand ready to work with WDFW again at the Barn Pipe site.

We appreciate our relationship with WDFW and the opportunity to comment on the SEPA determination for this project. If you have any questions about our comments please call me at (360) 466-1512 or email swalsh@skagitcoop.org.

Sincerely,

Stan Walsh
Environmental Services Manager
Skagit River System Cooperative